

## Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 SR-02

ORM-03 RSR-01 IO-13 EUR-25 EB-11 /188 W

----- 111907

R 171030Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6093

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E.O. N/A

TAGS: SREF, VS

SUBJ: NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE: RESETTLEMENT OF PEOPLE IN DELTA  
REGION

REF: STATE 152620

1. IN JAN 73, THE GVN WAS IN POSSESSION OF VOLUMINOUS INFORMATION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE PLANNING EXTENSIVE "LANDGRAB" OPERATIONS IN MILITARY REGION 4. MR-4 COMMANDER, MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN VAN NGHI, WAS ORDERED TO COUNTER COMMUNIST ATTACKS AND PROTECT THE MORE THAN SIX MILLION PEOPLE LIVING IN THE SIXTEEN DELTA PROVINCES.

2. AMONG OTHER PRECAUTIONS HIS STAFF DEVELOPED A PLAN TO RELOCATE 27,680 PERSONS IN SEVEN PROVINCES. CURRENT ESTIMATES BY US MISSION FIELD PERSONNEL ARE THAT 17,110 PERSONS WERE ACTUALLY RELOCATED. GENERAL NGHI ESTIMATES THAT ONLY 8,000 WERE MOVED. EXCEPT FOR 100 FAMILIES, ALL RELOCATIONS WERE COMPLETED DURING THE PERIOD JAN-APR 73.

3. THE USG WAS REQUESTED THROUGH NORMAL CHANNELS TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO RELOCATION PROGRAM. REQUEST WAS DISAPPROVED BECAUSE US AID MISSION FIELD PERSONNEL FELT THAT ON BALANCE RELOCATIONS WERE NOT ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, ALTHOUGH, IN RETROSPECT, IT  
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SEEMS CERTAIN THAT HAD SUCH AID BEEN FURNISHED, MANY OF THOSE

WHO RETURNED TO MORE EXPOSED POSITIONS PROBABLY WOULD HAVE REMAINED HAD GENERAL NGHI BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD THEM PROMPT ASSISTANCE. GENERAL NGHI CARRIED OUT AS MUCH OF PROGRAM AS HE COULD USING OTHER RESOURCES. INCLUDED WAS SOME ROOFING MATERIAL DONATED BY AUSTRALIA AND CANADA. PROVISION OF RICE AND BUILDING MATERIALS PROBABLY KEYED TO IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF PEOPLE FOR FOOD AND SHELTER RATHER THAN TO SENATE ELECTIONS.

4. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ALL RELOCATIONS WERE LIMITED IN DISTANCE TO LESS THAN TEN KILOMETERS. MOST WERE UNDER TWO KILOMETERS. MAJORITY OF FAMILIES CONTINUED TO FARM THEIR FIELDS EVEN AFTER RELOCATION. PURPOSE OF RELOCATIONS WAS TO CONCENTRATE POPULATION SO THAT LIMITED NUMBER OF TROOPS COULD PROVIDE MAXIMUM SECURITY. POPULATION DESIROUS OF SECURITY BUT UNDERSTANDABLY RELUCTANT TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES EMPTY. PROBABILITY IS THAT A NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE MOVED DID TELL SOLDIERS THAT THEY WANTED MORE SECURITY AND WERE WILLING TO MOVE, TEMPORARILY. OTHERS UNDOUBTEDLY TOLD AMERICANS THAT THEY WERE VERY RELUCTANT TO ABANDON THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMES.

5. AS SOON AS MR-4 COMMANDER JUDGED SECURITY SITUATION WARRANTED IT, HE STOPPED RELOCATIONS. MANY OF THE PEOPLE ARE NOW MOVING BACK INTO OLD AREAS. GVN IN MR-4 AS IN OTHER AREAS OF COUNTRY DESIROUS OF GETTING AS MANY PEOPLE BACK WORKING THEIR OWN LAND AS POSSIBLE.

6. REPORT REQUESTED PARA 3 REFTEL BEING POUCHED.

7. COMMENT: GVN POLICY STATES THAT, QUOTE POPULATION RELOCATION MUST BE LIMITED TO A MINIMUM AS OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE REMAINS ONE OF BRINGING SECURITY TO THE PEOPLE INSTEAD OF MOVING PEOPLE TO SECURE AREAS UNQUOTE. OBVIOUSLY IN THIS INSTANCE GENERAL NGHI, UNDER THE CONDITIONS HE COULD REASONABLY EXPECT IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CEASEFIRE, FELT THAT SECURITY COULD NOT BE PROVIDED WITHOUT SOME RELOCATION. AT PRESENT TIME, HOWEVER, HIS ACTIONS APPEAR TO BE CONSISTENT WITH GVN POLICY.

8. THE TREASTER ARTICLE, WHILE ESSENTIALLY ACCURATE IN ITS BASIC FACTS, IS NOT CORRECT AS TO MOTIVATIONS NOR DOES IT PRESENT THE ACTUAL ESTIMATES UNDERLYING EVERY ACTION ALTHOUGH HE WAS AWARE OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEM. THEREFORE, THE TONE OF THE ARTICLE, IMPLYING AS USUAL THE HEARTLESS MANIPULATION OF THE PEASANTS BY AN OPPRESSIVE GVN, IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. IF THE REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO THE UNNAMED AMERICAN OFFICIALS ACTUALLY WERE MADE AT ALL, IT SEEMS CLEAR OFFICIAL WAS OFFERING POLITICAL JUDGEMENTS HE WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT QUALIFIED TO MAKE.  
MARTIN

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NNN

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